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# QUAD, A QUADRILATERAL SECURITY DIALOGUE FOR A SECURE AND RESILIENT ASIA-INDO-PACIFIC

Luciano Magaldi / 02/07/2022 / 0

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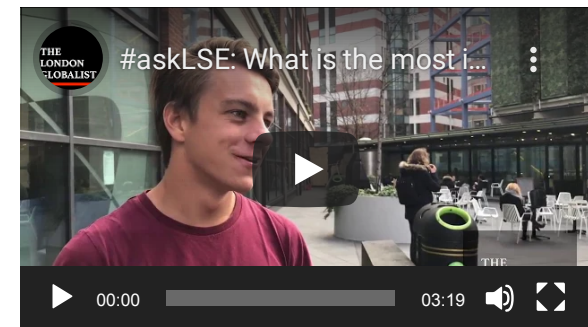


The Covid-19 epidemic that engulfed the world in 2020 has given rise to small groupings of states working together to address related health issues. However, the increase in regional or international cooperation is not limited to public health crises. Countries, particularly in the Indo-Pacific area, have started to turn to small, informal groupings that handle specific security challenges, whether it is the [Quadrilateral Security Dialogue 2.0](#) or the [AUKUS](#) grouping of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, created in September 2021. These minor country alliances are known as 'minilateral' or 'plurilateral', and the Indo-Pacific region has evolved into a melting pot of these alliances.

Due to its physical location, the Indo-Pacific, a meeting point of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, has drawn a lot of attention. Presently, an Indo-Pacific strategy has been developed by practically all major nations, including the United States, the European Union, France, Japan, Australia, and the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#). A crucial turning point in the dynamics of major powers in international relations in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century is also the 'not-so-peaceful' development of China as a major power in the region. Clearly, some Indo-Pacific countries are concerned about Beijing's aggressive moves in the area.

As a result, like-minded nations have begun to work together on specific problems and target-based strategies to address both conventional and non-conventional concerns that are emerging in the Indo-Pacific area, such as piracy, IUU fishing, and climate change. In light of this, it is important to comprehend the importance of the Indo-Pacific region and how minilateral organizations like Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) contribute to the region's increased security and resilience.

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The Indian and Pacific oceans did not geographically join to form the Indo-Pacific at the time the word was first used. The phrase 'Indo-Pacific' actually refers to an 'imagination of space' that is based on a political criterion and physical boundary. **Although Prime Minister Shinzo Abe first proposed the idea of the Indo-Pacific as a 'coming together of two oceans' in 2007**, today practically all of the main regional nations are paying close attention to the Indo-Pacific. The change from the more widely used term 'Asia-Pacific' to 'Indo-Pacific' emphasizes that the shifting dynamics in the region prevent the two oceans from being addressed separately.

While the term 'Asia-Pacific' refers to the portion of Asia that is located in the Pacific Ocean (northeast Asia, south-east Asia, and the South Western Pacific), 'Indo-Pacific' offers a more comprehensive definition that includes major regional powers (ASEAN, Australia, India, Japan, and the United States), island nations with abundant natural resources, crucial sea lines of communication, significant trade routes, the **Strait of Malacca**, the **Strait of Taiwan**, the **Strait of Hormuz**. Therefore, the Indo-Pacific region, which stretches from the coasts of Africa to the shores of America, is a theater of opportunity for many countries around the world.

Due to the presence of significant economies like those of the United States, China, Japan, and India, the Indo-Pacific area has emerged as the global economic hub. The shifting trade landscape in the Indo-Pacific, the China-United States trade conflict, and the multilateral institutions' economic dependence on China have brought to light the limitations of these multilateral forums and forced countries in the region to look for alternatives to further their objectives in the area.

The current balance of power in the Indo-Pacific has been threatened by China's substantial military and forceful claims, in addition to its robust economic growth. Beijing has set the goal of modernizing its military by 2035 with the intention of becoming a '**world-class**' military power by 2049. The majority of the South China Sea is claimed by China, and its **Nine-Dash Line** also makes claims on three island nations in the Indo-Pacific. China and Japan also have a dispute over the **Senkaku Islands**, and in 2020, China surprised New Delhi once more by sending troops into an area that was considered to be sovereign.

Therefore, nations have begun to form smaller, informal organizations to address the dynamic problems of the region in order to curb the ascent of China and handle the security difficulties of the region. The Covid-19 pandemic furthered the notion that the multilateral forums' function has become constrained and that there is a pressing need to close this gap in order to arrive at practical answers.

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The countries have begun to develop minilateral organizations like Quad and AUKUS to bridge the gap between multilateralism and bilateralism.

Particularly, a tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004 drew four countries together to address the region's enormous problem. Australia, India, Japan, and the United States thought about the notion of creating an informal security grouping of like-minded nations that would give a platform to address the dynamic difficulties that occur in the region after the minilateral grouping's initial success. A security discussion in the area was first proposed in 2006 by Japan, then led by former **Prime Minister Shinzo Abe**, during a visit to India. The four Quad countries then gathered for the first time in 2007, outside of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Manila. The **Quad 1.0 grouping**, however, initially failed because Australia, a strong economic ally of China, was reluctant to remain a member because of China's sensitivity to joining a potential 'Asian NATO' in the Indo-Pacific region to suppress China's rise.

However, as the major economies in the Indo-Pacific region began to express security worries, a concurrent potential of the resurgence of **Quad 2.0** predominated. As a result, the security alliance between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States was reestablished in 2017. The goals for the Indo-Pacific that support collaboration based on values of peace, stability, and an inclusive Indo-Pacific area were set during the First Quad meeting in November 2017. Terrorism and improving regional connection were two issues that were frequently brought up in the discussion of regional challenges.

The Quad meetings, such as the ministerial meeting of the Quad (2019), the '**Malabar Exercise**' (2020), the first virtual summit of the Quad leaders (March 12, 2021), the first in-person summit of the Quad leaders (September 24, 2021), the meeting of the Quad foreign ministers (February 11, 2022) and the most recent '**Quad Joint Leaders' Summit**' (May 24, 2022) in Tokyo, Japan, among others, show that the Quad is a developing minilateral grouping that envisions the United States, India, and Japan, three of the Quad grouping's countries that are leaders in the space sector, have pledged to deepen space cooperation through exchanging satellite data and fostering capacity building.

It is obvious that Quad has grown into a crucial platform for democracies that aspire to cooperate on a variety of topics while assuring more target-oriented and comparatively quicker decision-making procedures to match the needs of the moment. However, the importance of ASEAN to the Quad's Indo-Pacific strategy shows that minilateral groupings like the Quad are not a replacement for

multilateralism but rather a means of bridging the gap between bilateralism and multilateralism in order to address the region's emerging challenges and investigate potential areas of cooperation.

While the Quad framework has given the region's security environment a way to adjust to changes, the alliance should think about stepping up its engagement with key regional actors including Indonesia, South Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, and New Zealand. Second, the Quad alliance might improve collaboration in the field of defense technologies. Aerial and military exercises can be launched for bolstering defense ties and interoperability training among the member countries, even though India's Malabar Exercise is a significant naval exercise in the region. Thirdly, the 'five eyes' system of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States can be expanded to include intelligence exchange. Additionally, Quad should improve coordination with other regional minilateral and multilateral conferences like AUKUS, JAI, ASEAN, the [Indian Ocean Rim Association](#), and the [East Asia Summit](#).

Finally, the Quad and other Indo-Pacific countries need to improve their defense and economic cooperation in the region to effectively fight Chinese threats and other non-traditional security problems in the region. In order to achieve this, it is crucial to intensify collaboration with the newly formed Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, established forums like ASEAN, security groupings like AUKUS, and intelligence-sharing minilaterals like the '[U.S.-Japan-ROK](#)' trilateral alliance.

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